



### **Ready to Rent© – A Program Description**

This education program was designed by the Portland Housing Center to provide housing readiness education to low-income families who have had past difficulties being successful tenants. The curriculum is designed for participants to establish an action plan contract as part of the training course. The course is delivered over a 4 to 6 week period with each session being 2 ½ hours. Participants must complete the full course and fulfill their contract to receive a Ready to Rent© Diploma, which will then be recognized by housing providers as a compensating factor to some negative rental history. The curriculum includes instruction and information in these steps:

- Ready to Get Started sets the tone for all succeeding sessions. A good part of the session is spent establishing a level of comfort with peers and trainers. Instructors then emphasize that participants, with help from peers and trainers, can take charge of their own situation and take positive actions to improve.
- Ready to Solve Problems includes participants completing their action plan contract, based on identified challenges in the areas of Rental History, Money Management, Income, Credit and Finance, Legal Problems, or other identified issues. Interactive workstations are established in the classroom around each of these topics, with work plans for participants to undertake and complete.
- Ready to Prepare Finances focuses on producing a workable budget or “spending plan.” The participants begin with choosing and prioritizing goals. They then take a look at current spending habits, then move on to an analysis of income. They stop briefly to consider moving expenses, and then finish with a proposed spending plan that puts participants on the road to renting.
- Ready to Shop for a Home has three major themes: Finding a place; the application process; and an introduction to the rental agreement. Participants begin by reviewing housing needs and wants identified and prioritized in the first session. Participants use these priorities to create a shopping list to screen available rental units. After learning to read want ads, participants model communication skills for making calls and talking to landlords.
- Ready to Settle In is about being a successful renter. The session begins by examining the rental agreement in close detail. Participants then identify problem-solving strategies and practice their skills in implementing them. This session is designed to strengthen the message that participants must understand and follow the rules in their rental agreements. Further, when problems arise, they must address them in a business-like manner.

- Ready to Move On is the last of the series and is focused on successful completion of tenancy and of the training. Learning activities are directed to “moving on.” The content emphasizes ordinary and proper moving procedures but also considers the possibility of eviction. During previous sessions, participants collected questions that they needed expert help with. In this session participants will meet with experts to have questions answered and problems addressed. The instructor invites appropriate experts, based on the work during sessions one through five. A graduation ceremony is held and designed in such a way as to impress upon participants the importance of what they have accomplished and to reward their work.

The program provides an Instructor’s manual for class facilitators to use in delivering the material. The teaching methods chosen utilize peer interaction and keep students involved and interested. Variety and pacing give the lessons appeal. The manual provides a scripted presentation: appropriate stories, case studies, and other activities contribute to the success of the program. Instructors are taught, however, to apply their own teaching styles and use the script as a guide. The student manual is an Action Kit that includes all the forms and information participants need to create their own Ready to Rent© plan.

The program also provides for instructor training. The curriculum for this one-day workshop was designed to provide class participants basic adult learning information and opportunities to study the material and practice delivery. Professionals in the social services field, with expertise and background in training, handle management of the classes and their instruction. All instructors are required to attend the one-day training and be certified. The agency using the program is licensed to help ensure a standard of delivery.

For more information on Ready to Rent©, please contact Peg Malloy of the Portland Housing Center at 503/282-1397 or [pmalloy@teleport.com](mailto:pmalloy@teleport.com).